



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

AUDITOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

SUZANNE M. BUMP, ESQ.

AUDITOR

March 14, 2018

TEL: 617-727-2075

Dear Legislators,

The pounding we've taken from *two* "100-year" storms in a matter of weeks is a grim reminder that climate change is happening right now and with a greater severity than has been previously predicted. Experts tell us that this is the new normal which should give all of us in state and local government a much greater sense of urgency about the need to develop and implement adaptation and resiliency plans for our vulnerable infrastructure systems.

In January 2017, my office issued a report – based in part on an extensive survey of local officials – about the severe fiscal challenges associated with maintaining and enhancing our state's water infrastructure systems. One of the issues we highlighted in that study was that the increasing frequency and duration of severe weather events associated with climate change now pose an immediate and growing threat to our water systems. At the same time, however, only six percent of responding communities stated that they have the capacity and funding to incorporate climate adaptation and resiliency into their long-term capital planning.

The Commonwealth's lack of preparedness to meet this imminent threat is all too clear, and we must collectively act to ensure our cities and towns are equipped with the resources to prepare for the challenges of climate change. Recently, the Senate unanimously approved Senate Bill 2196, which is one important step to help move us toward that goal. S.2196 builds on the initial work begun under Governor Baker's Executive Order No. 569 to require state agencies to develop a comprehensive adaptation management action plan in response to climate change and to provide encouragement and resources for the development of similar plans at the municipal and regional levels.

Of course, as critical as it is, planning for climate change adaptation and resiliency is only the first step. We are also going to need to invest in our water infrastructure – and do so at higher levels and at a faster pace than we have over the past forty years. The damages and disruptions we have seen this winter are not isolated episodes; they are a forecast of things to come. Equipping our municipalities with the resources to effectively plan for the impact of climate change requires our immediate attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne M. Bump".

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth